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ABSTRACT

Several time-management techniques will help administrators accomplish necessary objectives and tasks. The most important technique is to prioritize activities, first distinguishing "desired" from "required" activities, and then organizing them according to the "ABCDF" formula of setting priorities: A=Absolutely, B=Better Do, C=Can Wait, D=Delegate and Deadline, F=Forget It. This formula can be used to segregate daily desk routines, as well as to schedule easily neglected but important conferences, faculty observations, and school "walk-through" times on a large desk calendar. This calendar should include phone numbers of contact persons next to reminders of regularly scheduled meetings and should use such visual aids as different colored inks. Administrators can use secretarial help to screen mail and visitors, to complete letters and forms, and to perform other administrative duties which will save the administrator time. The most difficult strategy, however, is learning to say "No" by asking: (1) whether the task contributes to the welfare of the school; (2) whether it needs to be done now; and (3) whether I am the only person who can handle it. Administrators should handle only those tasks which get a "Yes" answer to all three questions. (IW)

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ABCDF - Time Management for New Administrators

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"Even though TIME is not on the Stock Exchange, it is valuable and precious." To paraphrase Will Rogers..."and they're not making any more of it."

To best use the time available, a system of time management must be designed and implemented, and that system must be suitable for YOU. How you manage your time has a direct impact on the school community.

First, identify what you wantto accomplish and that which you are required to accomplish. Prioritize the activities, and establish a time frame for those priorities.

As you prioritize, use this alphabetical formula:

A = Absolutely
B = Better Do
C = Can Wait
D = Delegate and Deadline
F = Forget It

You can use this formula on a daily basis as you go through phone messages, mail, papers, etc. To help you systematically sort those messages and mail, mark the paper with one of the formula letters ("F" papers and messages should have been discarded right away): even stack your papers in four groups to help you manage the time needed to attend to them.

Secondly, use the formula to prioritize the pressures of administration. Your idealistic goals of administrator are compounded by the daily routine of observation and supervision of faculty, financial management, personnel and personal relations with personnel, responsibilities to the central office, etc. You must base your goals somewhat idealistically yet based in reality.

"One of these days is none of these days." English proverb

To help order your priorities, try employing the "Big Calendar on Your Desk" as a most useful tool. Note details for needed information, mailing dates, calls to specific people, etc. a few days ahead of the

actual deadline. Use different ink colors, stars, boxes, etc. - anything to make it stand out when you consult your calendar. Use the calendar to block out observation times, conference times, etc. that are so important in the evaluation process. These observation and conference times seem to "disappear" if you do not schedule them in ahead of time. Consider these times as important as any other required meetings and conferences. In addition to scheduling the required observations, schedule "walk-through" times for the school building; if you don't schedule <u>your</u> time for it, you will get caught "in the office" and lessen the time available for you to get to know the real school - routines , pupils , teachers, etc. Remember the previously quoted English proverb, as we administrators realize that "I was going to do that" all too frequently is the case - so, schedule it in!

As the "Big Calendar on Your Desk" gets filled in, don't forget to mark in the regularly schedules meetings with coordinators, assistants, pastor, cental office staff, School Board presidents, etc. When a notice of a meeting arrives in the mail or over the phone, jot it down in the calendar immediately, and add the phone number of the person in charge, especially if it is someone unknown to you; if something changes in your schedule, you will be able to contact that person immediately without having to search for a number.

As is normal, expect the unexpected. To control time spent with non-scheduled "walk-ins", use body language to terminate a conference; look at your watch or clock, stand up, open the door: you may also begin the conference/visit with an opening statement of how much time you have available before your next scheduled appointment, and <u>adhere</u> to that time frame....use whatever is necessary to <u>control</u> your time.

"Work expands to fill the time allotted."

Your secretary can be a great help in managing <u>your</u> time by (1) using a letter opener to slit open envelopes and only put mail of interest to you on your desk - all other mail should be routed to the correct person/department (2) screening of phone messages and "walk-ins" (3) "weed" out undesired mail and throw it away - you should be able to inform your secretary of the mail that "is never to cross your desk"

(4) learn to read <u>your</u> handwriting so that work can be completed without he/she interrupting you to "figure out the chicken-scratchings" and (5) set up a method of shorthand so that you and the secretary can lessen the time needed to complete letters, forms, etc. Before the school year begins, spend time with your secretary and develop a positive working relationship that will not only be beneficial to the school but also for the management of <u>your</u> time.

Finally, the most difficult strategy to learn and use is the ability to say "No". To say "No" is particularly important for a new administrator, for you have ideals in your mind to do a fine job, but your body is under pressure to complete the objectives and requirements of the position. There are reasons for saying"No": apply the "ABCDF" formula and ask yourself the following questions:

(1) Does this contribute to the welfare of the school?
(2) Does it need to be done now?
(3) Am I the only person in this school/situation that can handle it?

Make it a personal rule to handle the task only if it gets a "Yes" on the three questions. If it doesn't, say "No"! It will allow you the freedom to complete the necessary objectives and tasks.

By applying the "ABCDF" formula and using it habitually, you <u>can</u> order your time on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly schedule. "Time is a sacred gift." Your gift to yourself and the school is to use time well and wisely in the best interests of all those you touch in your new role as school administrator.